

Mr. Samuel King and Mrs. "Inny King
7154 Oberlin Circle
Frederick, MD 21703

Harold Weisberg
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Dear Mr. and Mrs. King,

12/26/96

When I phoned a week ago as I told Mrs. King my purpose was to see to it that Mr. King was aware of some considerations I believe he is not. I asked that he phone me that Saturday, December 21, and when I started to indicate to Mrs. King what some of these considerations are and she hung the phone up. Mr. King did not phone me.

After getting Mrs. King's message that she would like the typing work I could offer her she came to pick it up. I then explained to her that when she was finished I would need the disk, that I would pay for it and provide the paper. All those who have done this typing for me included the slight ^dcost of the disk on the bills ~~they~~ submitted on their typing.

When I read what she had retyped I was aghast. She seems to have a phobia against paragraphs and among other faults that cannot be excused she ignored where insertions were to be made. "Among other things" includes omitting some of what she was to type when it ^{was} clearly there- she just skipped it. As a result, in the first of the chapters she retyped, a lengthy excerpt from the Washington Post came out as a single paragraph. So also did a full-page article from the Columbia (University) Journalism Review. On one of the places she ignored clear instructions on where insertions were to be made she retyped seven full pages in the wrong place!

I returned this to Mrs. King for her to correct the multitudinous errors she had made. She then returned the ^{supposedly} corrected typing to me. I was not well then and when I read the first of ^{of} these chapters that she persisted in some of these same errors was too much for me. When you both came for me to pay her I had not yet read past that one chapter. I found I had to read it with the original at hand and had to read the original along with the retyped copy to be certain that all had been retyped and that all was where I intended it to be.

All of this took much time for me, time that at my age, now 83, and in the poor state of my health I do not have to waste. Going over what Mrs. King retyped took me as long as writing it if it did not take longer. And her end product after her second retyping still is poor and I'll have to pay someone else for correcting Mrs. King's persisting errors. This is what I told her when I did not pay her for correcting her own errors. She and Mr. King talked this over in their car and then came to the door. I left them in and began to explain this to Mr. King.

Mr. King did all the talking for the two of you. Mr. King's expressed belief is that no matter how terrible Mrs. King's work was when she wanted to be paid for the same work twice and the second time for correcting her mistakes, that was proper. Although as I told you I was not up to that kind of stress because of high blood pressure, kidney failure and congestive heart failure for which I was twice hospitalized this year for two months, I did show you that Washington Post column on which Mrs. King eliminated all paragraphing—two typed pages of no paragraphing. Mr. King's preposterous fabrication then was that made no difference at all because when books are published editors make those corrections.

That was too much and I cut further discussion of telling you that the disk is mine and I want it. Mr. King refused to give it to me and he has not given it to me since then.

Mr. King has apparently been reading of the large advances some books get and assumed that he could latch onto some of that. There is no contract on this manuscript for publication, none has been sought, none will be sought, and it is entirely a noncommercial scholarly record for our history for the future. I distribute duplicates of the disks to a few scholars, historians, sociologists and a lawyer who is seeking to improve the archive left by one of the Members of the Warren Commission. I make no charge for any of this, never have.

Mr. King's assumption that I had such a profitable contract part of which he might grab for his wife had no basis in fact at all. He just made it up out of nothing. He also, from the profundity of his ignorance, made up that editors at publishing houses are paid to undo the damages done by those like his wife did to this manuscript. The fact is that manuscripts do not begin with editors and editors do not have any such function. Readers are the first to go over manuscripts and one as wretchedly badly done as the one Mrs. King wrecked would be rejected forthwith. No editor would see it—unless as a horrible example.

Moreover, no editor has any way of knowing and replacing what Mrs. King just omitted. Nor has an editor any means of knowing what Mrs. King typed in the wrong place should have been done with it.

I made no demand for the return of money for which I believe Mrs. King is not entitled for the mess she made by simple carelessness and her strange dislike of paragraphing. I asked only for the disk, which is mine and I told Mrs. King that to begin with, as I did all others doing any of this retyping. If Mrs. King did not include that on her bill—and I have not checked it—I paid her what she asked for without questioning her as has been my practice with all students—that not only is her oversight, not mine, but the paper she did not return costs

more than a disk so she has been paid for it in any event.

Mrs. King knew in advance that my typing and handwriting are poor for a number of reasons, including that I must sit with my legs up. Mr. King made the untruthful claim that these mistakes Mrs. King made were because of my typing and writing. The fact is that had there been any relevance, that would have been included in Mrs. King's time and she was paid for it. The fact also is, as is clear from examining both the rough draft and what she did with it, that she had very, very little such trouble and she made only a few mistakes that can be attributed to that. These mistakes are of a word or of a letter or two in a word. That and no more and there are very, very few of them. But there is and there can be no connection between Mr. King's made-up claim and Mrs. King's refusal to paragraph both what is quoted verbatim and what I wrote and her misplacing large chunks of what I wrote.

So I am again asking for the return of my property, that disk, and without being altered in any way. Particularly without any erasure. If I do not get it as it supposedly is, identical with the printout given me, I'll have to pay someone else for starting and doing it all over again. If I have to do that I'll be coming to you two for repayment and for the damage that does to me and my work.

If that does not happen soon (and when it happens I'll have to check the disk to be certain there has not been anything done to it) then I think the two of you had better speak to a lawyer and in doing that learn what this can cost you if I have to resort to that means of getting back from you what is mine.

Be assured that despite my age and impaired health I believe you have given me no alternative and if I have to do that I'll have to consider adding the damage you have done me and the time you have cost me.


Harold Weisberg

Mrs. King gave me no explanation for all her mistakes. She did not say that she had any trouble with the manuscript or in reading it. That ~~perhaps~~ perhaps she knew that would not stick because she knew that I had made a xerox of the manuscript and told her that if she had any question to call me. She made no such call. This means that she had no trouble reading the manuscript.